OPEN AND SHUT?

Tweets by @RickyPo

The State of Open Access Predatory publishing Institutional Repositories Green OA Gold OA Self-archiving Copyright Basement Interviews OA Interviews OA Essays Open Access in Serbia Open Access in India Open Access in Egypt ScienceDirect Open Access in California OA in Latin America Open Access in the Humanities MDPI Preprints Selecting Reviewers Global Research Council OA Big Deal Open Notebook Science Elsevier Gates Foundation OA in

Sunday, February 21, 2016

Why I won't be doing that video interview about open access

AN UPDATE ON THIS STORY IS AVAILABLE HERE

Recently I was contacted by *Library Journal* (LJ) in connection with a series of video interviews it is conducting with open access "VIP's and leaders". The first interview – with the Director of Harvard University's Office for Scholarly Communication Peter Suber – has already been published. Would I have some time to do an interview myself, I was asked? The project is for a new section of LJ's web site sponsored by the open access publisher Dove Press.

I liked the idea of doing a video interview but I was instinctively shy of being associated with a project that has a large Dove Press banner on the top right hand corner proclaiming it to be the "exclusive sponsor" of the site, along with a list of featured articles with "Sponsored by Dove Medical Press" in prominent red ink strapped across the top of each one. I felt that taking part would amount to endorsing Dove Press, which for reasons I will explain below I did not want to do.

I emailed LJ back to say I was not comfortable with doing an interview for a site sponsored by Dove Press, and asked whether it would consider posting any such video elsewhere on the LJ site. Strangely, I received no reply to this. As I was now intrigued as to how this site had come about, who had suggested the idea, and what its purpose was I also emailed LJ's Managing Editor. To this too I received no reply.

So what are my reservations about being associated with Dove Press? There are a number of issues here, including a discomfort with the publisher's marketing and PR activities, a concern with its editorial processes, some puzzlement over its lack of transparency, and a suspicion that its commitment to open access is not as deep as I would like.

Let's be clear, while some have accused Dove Press of being a "predatory" publisher, I am making no such claim here. Nor could I, since I don't have sufficient information to make a judgement either way. I am just stating the reasons why I personally do not want to be associated with the company.

Marketing and editorial

What is indisputable is that Dove Press has a somewhat controversial history. When it started out in 2008, for instance, it was criticised for spamming researchers. Its fiercest critic at that time was Gunther Eysenbach, who in 2008 wrote a blog post about Dove Press (plus fellow NZ-based publisher Libertas Academica) entitled "Spammer of the Month".

- Home
- About Richard Poynder
- Blog: *Open and Shut?*
- The State of Open Access
- The Basement Interviews
- Open Access Interviews
- Essays on Open Access
- Archive

Blogs, News & More:

Interview 1: Richard Poynder
Interview 2: Richard Poynder
Interview 3: Richard Poynder
DOAJ
BASE
LENS
Digital Koans
LSE Impact Blog
Heather Morrison
The Scholarly Kitchen
Open Access India
PLoS Blogs
Redalyc
SPARC Europe
IP Watchdog

PayPal Donate

Search This Blog

Search

Popular Posts

The OA Interviews: Taylor & Francis' Deborah Kahn discusses Dove Medical Press

Please note the postscript to this interview here The open-access publisher Dove Medical Press has a controversial past and I have writ...

Open Access: "Information wants to be free"?

South Africa OA in France SSRN OA & the Humanities Timothy Gowers Harold Varmus Peter Suber OA in Poland OA Embargoes Big Deal Finch Report Jeffrey Beall ALPSP OA Mandates PLOS Peer Review Springer BioMed Central Free Software Digital Preservation Dove Medical OA in Russia Radical OA Almost OA HEFCE Frontiers

Around that time, I interviewed Dove Press's Publisher Tim Hill. As part of that interview I asked him about the company's unsolicited emailing campaigns. He replied that these were all perfectly legal and that Dove Press had in any case ceased emailing researchers.

There is no reason to doubt this. I haven't noticed any complaints recently. On the other hand, it might be that spam messages from open access publishers are now so commonplace, and so apparently unstoppable, that researchers no longer even comment on such activities.

By then, in any case, Dove Press's marketing strategy seems to have changed, with the company becoming a frequent sponsor of events – e.g. here, here and here. Sponsorship is, of course, widely practised by scholarly publishers these days, and some may say it is unremarkable. But not *everyone* is comfortable with it, especially when it involves large powerful companies like Elsevier. Either way, Dove Press's exclusive sponsorship of part of LJ's web site seems to me to be a top-heavy approach to sponsorship.

There have also been complaints from other publishers about Dove Press launching "copycat" journals that confuse authors over their provenance. In 2010, for instance, a New York publisher told me that it had had to exert a great deal of pressure on Dove Press to get it to change the name of a couple of journals it had launched with identical or near identical titles to existing journals Maybe this is no more than the cut and thrust of business competition, but many might feel it not to be in the spirit of open access.

In addition, Dove Press has faced criticism over its editorial processes. In February 2010, for instance, a 45-year-old biology professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alabama in Huntsville called Amy Bishop shot dead three of her colleagues and wounded three others after being denied tenure. In reporting on the killing, journalists quickly discovered that one of Bishop's research papers had been published by Dove Press, and that she had named her own minor children as co-authors of the paper.

When I emailed Hill to ask him about this he replied, "We do ask that all co-authors be cited in any paper sent to us. Dr Amy Bishop was the corresponding author of this paper. Her paper ('*Effects of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors on motor neuron survival*') was peer-reviewed by 3 experts and revised by Dr Bishop prior to an editorial decision to accept the revised paper for publication." He added: "It appears, on the basis of media reports, that she [Bishop] was in breach of our authorship criteria."

This explanation by no means satisfied everyone, and since Dove Press was at that time a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) the criticism was directed at OASPA too, with demands that it investigate the activities of Dove Press (e.g. here and here).

Concern about Dove Press's editorial processes was further heightened in October 2013, when *Science* journalist John Bohannon conducted his now infamous "sting" in which he sent out a fatally flawed paper to 304 open access publishers. One of those to accept the flawed paper was Dove Press.

Commenting on the incident on the OASPA web site, Eysenbach said, "[H]ow much longer will this publisher be allowed to tarnish the reputation of open access and OASPA? How about three strikes and you are out?"

This time OASPA did investigate Dove Press. Its conclusion: "there was a lack of sufficient rigour in editorial processes" at the journal concerned (*Drug Design, Development and Therapy*). As a result, OASPA terminated Dove Press's membership in November 2013

(A print version of this eBook is available here) Earlier this year I was invited to discuss with Georgia Institute of Technology libraria...

The Life and Death of an Open Access Journal: Q&A with Librarian Marcus Banks

Librarians have been at the forefront of the open access movement since the beginning, not least because in 1998 the Association of Researc...

The Open Access Interviews: OMICS Publishing Group's Srinu Babu Gedela

***Update: On August 26th 2016, the US government (Federal Trade Commission) announced that it has charged OMICS with making false claims, ...

New Assignment

Slashdot is this week interviewing NYU professor Jay Rosen , a long-time proponent of civic journalism . Rosen recently started NewAssignm...

The Open Access Big Deal: Back to the Future

On a superficial reading open access is intended to do no more than what it says on the can: provide an internet-based scholarly communicat...

Copyright: the immoveable barrier that open access advocates underestimated

In calling for research papers to be made freely available open access advocates promised that doing so would lead to a simpler, less cos...

Community Action Publishing: Broadening the Pool

We are today seeing growing dissatisfaction with the pay-to-publish model for open access. As this requires authors (or their funders or ins...

PLOS CEO Alison Mudditt discusses new OA agreement with the University of California

The Public Library of Science (PLOS) and the University of California (UC) have today announced a two-year agreement designed to make...

Dove Press has also featured a number of times on the Retraction Watch site. In 2014, for instance, the site reported on the retraction of a Dove Press paper following heated media criticism of claims that green coffee bean extract could help people lose weight. This led to the authors of the Dove Press paper issuing a retraction note that said the "sponsors of the study cannot assure the validity of the data". The US Federal Trade Commission also investigated the matter, and this led to a settlement in which a Texas-based company was required to "pay $3.5 million, and to have scientific substantiation for any future weight-loss claims it makes." (See also here).

And in 2014 a researcher complained that Dove Press's peer reviewer form did not offer reviewers an option to reject papers.

It is therefore unsurprising that Dove Press at one time featured on Jeffrey Beall's list of "Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers". In April 2010 Beal also included Dove Press and Libertas Academica (the latter, claimed Beall, was a Dove Press brand rather than a separate company) in a comparative review he published in The Charleston Adviser entitled "*Predatory" Open-Access Scholarly Publishers*.

And it is unsurprising that Dove Press's membership of OASPA has been an on/off affair. The publisher joined OASPA in late 2009, but withdrew on 7th April 2010. It applied again in May 2012, and was accepted on 12th July 2012. As noted, following the *Science* sting it had its membership terminated by OASPA (on 5th November 2013). But it applied again in June 2015 and was accepted back into the organisation on 23rd September 2015. Dove Press is currently still a member of OASPA.

The publisher is also no longer on Beall's list, and it is currently a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Transparency

Personally, I also feel there is insufficient transparency at Dove Press. When I interviewed Tim Hill in 2008 I asked him who owned the company. In response he would say only that it was "created by a group of former publishing executives, mostly from ADIS International" (now part of Springer), and that the company was owned by "six private individuals."

And I believe that OASPA asked for too little information about the ownership of Dove Press when the publisher first joined.

Here the discussion becomes a little entangled with Libertas Academica. Since commentators like Beall and Eysenbach were claiming that Libertas Academica and Dove Press are the same company I also asked Tim Hill what if any connection there was between the two companies. Hill replied, "There is no connection other than a familial one. My son, Thomas, owns and operates Libertas Academica."

A year later I interviewed son Tom Hill, whose LinkedIn profile lists him as being the Publisher and CEO of Libertas Academica. When I asked him who owned the company he declined to say, on the grounds that it is a "privately held company". And while he was willing to say that he personally had an ownership stake in the company he declined to say what that was. When I asked him if his father had an ownership stake in Libertas Academica, or any involvement in the company, his reply was a simple "No".

When the Amy Bishop killing took place I did some research on New Zealand Companies House. This suggested to me that Tim Hill *did* have a stake in Libertas Academica. In fact, the records indicate that it was Tim Hill who in 2004 registered the company, and who was at that time the sole

Where is the Open Access Foundation?
While the term Open Access (OA) has its origins in the 2002 Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI), the concept and practice of OA has bee...

Blog Archive

2024 (1)
2022 (2)
2020 (4)
2019 (7)
2018 (20)
2017 (18)
2016 (14)
December (2)
November (1)
October (1)
September (1)
July (2)
June (1)
May (1)
April (1)
March (1)
February (2)
Why I won't be doing that video interview about op...
The OA Interviews: Kamila Markram, CEO and Co-Foun...
January (1)
2015 (18)
2014 (13)
2013 (32)
2012 (43)
2011 (22)
2010 (20)
2009 (22)
2008 (14)
2007 (9)
2006 (27)
2005 (31)
2004 (2)

Followers

shareholder and director. When I spoke to Tom Hill in 2009, his father Tim still appeared to be registered as a shareholder, as were Tom Hill, Ann Shirley Hill, and a couple of trusts.

In 2010 I emailed both Hills and asked them to clarify the situation. Tim replied that I had no legitimate business to ask the question, but added, "In light of your continued pursuit of this private matter I have checked with my lawyers and note that my initial directorship of Libertas had not been cancelled as they were instructed to do in 2005. This has now been done and Tom is the only director of Libertas Academica … [and] … I confess, yes, I personally own 1% of Libertas Academica."

He went on to say, "Our Family trust owns several assets including equity in publishing companies, real estate etc." He added that he had nothing to hide and always tried to be open, but "I draw the line at my personal financial and tax arrangements".

And he ended his email: "Henceforth I will not be providing you with any comment or information on any subject."

The response from son Tom Hill was similar. Initially he did not reply to my email, so I sent him a reminder – to which he replied, "I have no comment to make on your earlier email. Please cease immediately and permanently sending any further emails to me on this or any other matter."

Personally, I felt these to be excessive responses to my question. I certainly wasn't seeking any tax information, and since I had only asked the question twice (with a two-year gap between) I fail to see how it could be classified as "continued pursuit". Moreover, as the ownership details of New Zealand and UK companies are held in a freely available public database I don't see how this kind of information can be classified as private.

Be that as it may, New Zealand Companies House records that Tim Hill did resign his directorship in Libertas Academica, on 22nd February 2010. However, he still appears to have had a shareholding in the company in June 2011, before being finally removed from the register in June 2014. It may be that I am misreading the Companies House data. If so, I apologise to both Hills in advance. My problem is that they have boycotted me, so it difficult to check facts with them.

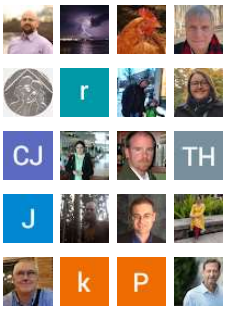
Does it matter?

But does Tim Hill's involvement with Libertas Academica have any relevance to this discussion? Some might feel it does, not least because during the period he was a director/shareholder of Libertas Academica this publisher too experienced a number of controversial incidents. In 2008, for instance, there were complaints about a paper published in a Libertas Academica journal called *Theoretical Biology Insights*. The concern was that the paper appeared to suggest that the complete state of all human brains might somehow be encoded in the Earth's magnetic field.

Responding to the criticism, Tom Hill explained that the paper had been inappropriately published as a result of "a database error caused by a server upgrade." The paper subsequently disappeared, but what exactly happened is not clear today as at some point the journal itself disappeared – although there is an echo of it in the Internet Archive, and a blank Editorial Board page here. Again, since I have been boycotted by Tom Hill I cannot seek clarification from him.

However, aware that Libertas Academica is a member of the archival service CLOCKSS I contacted them. A spokesperson informed me that since a "trigger event" never took place the journal was not archived at CLOCKSS. "In the case of *Theoretical Biology Insights*, my guess is that we were not aware of its existence," he said. "If we had been aware of it, I

Followers (119) Next



Follow

Open & Shut? by Richard Poynder is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 UK: England & Wales License.
Permissions beyond the scope of this license are available here

.

think we would have asked Libertas about triggering it. In principle a CLOCKSS-participating publisher should archive all of its journals in CLOCKSS; in this case, that didn't quite happen, but our preference would have been that Libertas archived it with us and then we had triggered it."

In any case, the spokesperson added, "No DOIs for the journal are registered in CrossRef. DOIs are a reference point for journals to meet a certain level of credibility, which this journal did not have."

Subsequently, in January 2010, I was contacted anonymously by someone complaining that one of Libertas Academica's journals – *Autism Insights* – was being used as a vehicle to propagate the ideas of the discredited medical researcher Andrew Wakefield. To this end, the anonymous informant said, its editorial board was dominated by members of Wakefield's Thoughtful House Center for Children, and included Wakefield himself. As the informant contacted me just prior to Tom Hill boycotting me I emailed Hill for a response. He replied that the journal's EiC did not wish to respond to the allegation, and neither did he.

While *Autism Insights* is no longer published the back issues are available on CLOCKSS. However, the list of editorial board members appears to have disappeared. "I am afraid," the CLOCKSS spokesperson told me, that "the publisher did not provide us an Editorial Board for archiving."

Ownership and management of Dove Press

But let's return to Dove Press. As noted, in 2008 Tim Hill declined to say who owns the company. In terms of senior management, the publisher's website currently states: "Philip Smith and Kevin Toale are the Executive Directors based in the UK, and Tim Hill is the Publisher based in New Zealand."

What about its locations? Dove Press's New Zealand registered address is that of a chartered accountancy in Auckland (the same address as for Libertas Academica). Dove Press's UK registered address is 97 Judd Street in London, and its web site indicates that the address for the editorial office is a PO Box in Corinthian Drive Albany, Auckland. The head office is at Beechfield House in Macclesfield, Cheshire.

It is not easy to make contact with the UK executives as their email addresses do not seem to be available. The couple of times I tried to call the head office I got an answer machine. There is a contact form on the web site, but I assume this is fed to Tim Hill, who has said he will not respond to any further messages from me. Dove Press's membership details on the OASPA site *do* offer an email address (publisher@dovepress.com). Again, however, this presumably goes to Tim Hill.

Elsewhere, Dove Press's About Page lists a "Medical Director" called Scott Fraser, who is a Consultant in the North East of the UK. Again his email address is not provided, but in 2010 I did manage to locate his institutional email address and emailed him there. My message went unanswered.

Tim Hill's unwillingness to give me information about the ownership of Dove Press seems odd in light of the fact that it is freely available in public databases. New Zealand Companies House, for instance, reveals that Dove Medical Press (NZ) is majority owned (99%) by UK-based Dove Medical Press Limited (with 1% held in the name of Ann Shirley Hill).

UK Companies House lists 5 current officers of Dove Press and 8 shareholders. The shareholders include The T & A Hill Family Trust, Kevin Toale, and Philip Smith. Another shareholder is Graeme Peterson. Peterson is also recorded as being the Managing Director and Company Secretary of Dove Press.

On his LinkedIn page Peterson describes himself as an experienced healthcare professional and CEO and MD of The Prime Medical Group, a company, he says, that partners with pharmaceutical clients "to create and deliver medical education and communication programmes with global, regional or national implementation." I take this to mean that it is a medical education and communications company (MECC).

Prime Medical Group has a number of associated businesses, including Prime Medica, Core Medica, Only Oncology, and Prime HealthCare Ltd, all based in Knutsford, Cheshire, and all of which seem to be in the MECC business. Peterson's various directorships can be viewed here.

I could find no mention of Dove Press on Peterson's LinkedIn page. I was also unable to find any mention of him on the Dove Press web site. To try and establish why, I sent a LinkedIn contact request to Peterson, a request he accepted. I followed up with a question about Dove Press but had received no reply by the time I posted this. By doing a number of web searches I eventually discovered an email address for Kevin Toale. My message to that address remained unanswered at the time I published this.

Other Dove Press shareholders listed in the company's Annual Return include JSI Communications, a company owned by one of the Dove Press directors, John Stolz. On his LinkedIn page Stolz describes himself as a former medical writer for ADIS International. JSI, he explains, plans and implements medical writing projects on behalf of pharmaceutical company clients. In 2005 Stolz was describing himself as Commissioning Editor for Dove Press.

Also listed as a Dove Press shareholder is William Dolben, whom I take to be the founder and CEO of Content Ed Net, a company that describes itself as the second largest seller of reprints to the global pharmaceutical industry. On his LinkedIn page, Dolben says he is a former ADIS and Wolters Kluwer Exec VP.

As noted, Tim Hill expressed the belief that I have no legitimate reason to ask him about the ownership of Libertas Academica, and he refused to say who owns Dove Press, presumably because – like his son – he viewed it to be private information.

However, in many countries (including the UK and New Zealand) the law requires that this information is supplied to a relevant government agency, which in turn has to make it available for public inspection. In the UK, this information is required under the Companies Act 2006. As Companies House explains, making this information public does not conflict with the Data Protection Act because "personal data is exempt if the data controller is duty bound to make it available to the public."

Indeed, company information has itself become open access in many countries. This means there is now no charge to view it online, and it can be linked to directly – e.g. here and here. Perhaps in recognition of this in 2015 Dove Press included a link to Companies House on its About page. (The link was not there up until 2014).

Beyond that, it seems to me that since the bulk of their revenue comes from the public purse there is an onus on scholarly publishers (even if private companies) to be transparent about both their ownership and their finances. There is also a view that in committing to open access, a publisher should be presumed to have committed to greater openness in all aspects of its business. As publishing consultant Joe Esposito has put it, "Let's be open about open access."

But what is most puzzling to me is why simply asking for ownership information led to a journalist (me) being boycotted by a publisher, with the

publisher saying that he will not provide that journalist with any further comment or information *about anything*!

What level of commitment to open access?

All of which leads me to a final question: how committed is Dove Press to open access? Certainly its attitude to licensing suggests it is not as committed as OA advocates might like. For instance, where OA advocates believe that the norm for open access should be use of the CC BY licence (and indeed OASPA "strongly encourages" its use), Dove Press insists on using the CC BY NC licence. While the copyright appears in the name of the authors of papers, the licensing information says, "Permissions beyond the scope of the License are administered by Dove Medical Press Limited." In other words, Dove Press is able to earn money on top of the fee it charges authors to publish their papers, none of which I assume finds its way back to the authors.

Doubtless for this reason, on its permissions page Dove Press expressly prohibits a number of uses of the content it publishes, unless further payment is made. And presumably in order to ensure this, its articles all include a link to the Copyright Clearance Center's permission form.

After playing around with the CCC permission form it seemed to me that if a business wanted to print out and photocopy on high quality paper a 9-page Dove Press article in order to, say, mail it to 200 doctors, the cost would be $13,803.50 (or $ 69,003.50 for 1,000 doctors). This is income, remember, that Dove Press can earn on top of the $2,310 per paper that it charges authors in order to make their work open access.

It is also worth pointing out that although Dove Press implies – both on its own website and on the LJ web site – that it is celebrating 10 years of commitment to open access this is not strictly accurate. When I spoke to Tim Hill eight years ago he told me that the company was conceived as a subscription business, not an open access publisher, and it was at that time still selling subscriptions, and charging users pay-per-view fees of $59 per paper.

Finally, with many now calling for open peer review, some might feel Dove Press's single blind peer review process to be a little out of keeping with the spirit of the times. Dove Press reviewers (who can vary from 2 to 4) are not named, and the reviews remain secret.

Let me stress once again that I make no claim about the probity or otherwise of Dove Press. I am working on the assumption that it is an honest and well-meaning organisation, and its directors and shareholders upstanding members of the community. But the way I see it is that a company that has over the years been involved in a number of controversial incidents, that appears to have a less than full commitment to open access, and which has boycotted a journalist simply for posing ownership questions, is now asking that journalist (by proxy, via LJ) to endorse it – which is what I feel I would be doing were I to accept LJ's invitation to feature on a Dove Press-sponsored web site. I hope readers can understand why I do not wish to do that.

What does also surprise me is that LJ did not ask me to explain why I feel uncomfortable about accepting its invitation, and the managing editor did not respond to my enquiry about its Dove Press-sponsored *Open Access in Action* website.

Posted by Richard Poynder at 13:18

8 comments:

Peter Suber said...

When my interview with Gary Price appeared in Library Journal, Richard asked by email whether I knew in advance that the interview would be flanked with an ad saying that it was sponsored by Dove, and if I did know, whether I had any qualms about doing the interview.

I replied: "(1) I didn't know the Dove ad would appear on the page. (2) But I would have accepted the interview anyway, because I trust Gary Price and LJ. I can't imagine that the interview questions, or my answers, would be spun by an advertiser."

He later asked whether he could quote me. But unfortunately I was on then the road and couldn't answer until after I saw his piece online.

I'm glad to fill that gap now, and to elaborate a bit further.

I share Richard's two-sided attitude toward Dove Press. On the one hand, I have doubts about it, based primarily on Richard's own 2008 investigation < http://goo.gl/q1jVgm >. On the other hand, I haven't done my own investigation of Dove, and didn't know how Dove might have changed since 2008. Hence (quoting Richard's new piece), "while some have accused Dove Press of being a 'predatory' publisher, I am making no such claim here. Nor could I, since I don't have sufficient information to make a judgement either way."

Richard isn't saying that I endorsed Dove Press, merely that he's reluctant to endorse it himself. I appreciate his careful wording and share his reluctance. For example, I wouldn't have done the interview if I thought it amounted to an endorsement of Dove Press. But I don't think it amounted to an endorsement, and I don't think any careful reader would assume that an interviewee endorses a company just because the company's ad appears on the same page as the interview.

I won't encourage Richard to do the interview. But if LJ can arrange to do it without a Dove ad on the page, I'd love to read it.

February 22, 2016 6:30 pm

Richard Poynder said...

Thank you for commenting Peter.

You say: *I don't think any careful reader would assume that an interviewee endorses a company just because the company's ad appears on the same page as the interview.*

I can agree with that, but I think you understate the situation here. This is not a case of a Dove ad appearing on the same page as the interview that LJ did with you.

The way Gary Price described the project when he invited me was that the interviews are for "a new section of the LJ site sponsored by Dove" – a section of the site apparently dubbed "Open Access in Action". Dove Press says that the site was "developed in collaboration with Library Journal."

The way I read this is that Dove Press has not placed an ad, but rented a section of the LJ web site. And it is getting a lot of coverage as a result. There is a large banner on the page where your interview appears announcing that Dove Press is the "exclusive sponsor" of the site, and Dove Press is mentioned quite a few times on the page, with a number of articles headed, "Sponsored by Dove Medical Press".

And if you access the site with an Android phone or iPhone/iPad the publisher's dominance of the site is that much greater, with a further two large banners added. In fact, if you access it with a phone the top Dove Press banner practically fills the whole screen of the phone and is larger than the actual video box where your interview appears.

One of the additional banners displayed on the phone version says "Dove Press Library Support from Dove … Discover Dove Press". When you click on the link you are invited to supply your name and other details.

The second additional banner states that Dove Press publishes 130+ peer-reviewed open access journals and invites the reader to "discover more". Clicking this links to a list of Dove journals.

In addition, throughout the 28 minutes of the video interview with you there is a banner constantly displayed on the bottom right of the video headed “Open Access in Action”. This uses Dove’s colour branding and images.

So while it is true that I didn’t say you were endorsing Dove, and I *certainly* didn’t think you intended to endorse it, I suspect many are likely to view it as an endorsement. It is not the careful readers that are at issue here. It is all the others, those who will see an interview with a leading spokesperson for the open access movement surrounded by Dove branding and, if only unconsciously, assume that that spokesperson is therefore endorsing the publisher.

On the wider topic of interviews, one interview I would like to see take place is one of Graeme Peterson undertaken by me.

February 23, 2016 12:07 pm

Peter Suber said...

Hi Richard. Thanks for following up.

My invitation letter didn't mention Dove. But I see your point that there's more going on here. I wouldn't want a jam company to put my photo on its jam jars without my knowledge and consent, even if I liked the jam. The same goes for framing my photo on a web page with its jamming message. Even less do I want to advertise for Dove, or be perceived to advertise for Dove. I say "even less" because this lies in my area of professional work, where I want to be professionally picky. And as I've said, I don't like this jam.

The remaining question is whether the overall framing makes it look like I'm endorsing Dove when I didn't mean to and wouldn't want to. I just watched the video for the first time. (Sorry, I didn't need to except to address your questions.) The title screen acknowledges LJ and Dove by name. But after that, the actual conversation footage includes a box in the corner saying "Open Access in Action", and the box doesn't mention Dove. It may be in Dove's colors, but I never would have noticed that myself and I'm still not sure I'd call them Dove's colors. I think the Dove connection in the conversation footage is weak.

You argue that the question isn't what careful readers would infer, but what many or most people would infer. Even if I agreed, in this case I still wouldn't worry that many or most people would think I'm endorsing Dove. If it turns out that I'm wrong about that, and people starting ask me whether I endorse Dove, I'll say what I'm saying here. (And no mistake, I welcome the chance to say it here.) But I should add that nobody has asked me whether I endorse Dove, not even you.

You say that you don't think Dove is merely advertising in LJ, but "renting a section of the LJ site." I can't go that far. I don't think Gary Price is for rent, and I don't think LJ is for rent (if that means something more than selling ads). This is what I meant in my original response when I said that I trusted Gary and LJ.

Most of your other points are about false or misleading claims in the Dove ad. I assume you're right about all of those. But since I didn't know I'd be flanked by a Dove ad, I wouldn't have known in advance which ad to investigate, if it was even available at the time for investigation. Like you, I want to worry about false framing, and conscripting interviewees to appear to give endorsements they didn't mean to give. But I also want to worry about the future of interviews if interviewees fear "inferred endorsements" in case they can't investigate a periodical's ads in advance.

February 23, 2016 8:50 pm

Richard Poynder said...

Thank you for your further comment Peter. I have tweeted both Library Journal and INFOdocket (Gary Price) inviting them to respond to these comments.

I am particularly struck at your saying that your invitation letter did not mention Dove.

February 23, 2016 9:28 pm

Smut Clyde said...

It would seem that the Liberty Academica management monitor your blog, which is flattering. The "Editorial Board" page of "Autism Insights" has transformed into the following disclaimer (I hope I can quote it without committing a copyright violation). Note the date at the end:

http://www.la-press.com/journal.php?pa=editorial_board&journal_id=155

Autism Insights

This journal is no longer published by Libertas Academica. All articles previously published in Autism Insights are permanently hosted by CLOCKSS and are available for download here.

Statement on recent claims made about Autism Insights

It has recently been claimed that this journal was originally established to promote the views of Andrew Wakefield. While Wakefield was among the members of the journal's editorial board prior to the GMC decision against him, following which he was removed, the journal was not established to promote his views. All papers submitted to it were subject to peer review and independent editorial decision-making.

Libertas unreservedly regrets this brief association with Wakefield, but we are ethically obliged to respect the independence of editors in chief over appointments to editorial boards and in regard to editorial decisions on peer reviewed papers. It is inevitable that occasionally some editorial decisions will later be found to have been incorrect.

In addition to removing Wakefield, following the GMC decision Libertas evaluated the journal's future and concluded that the best course of action was to close it down in view of the harm done to its reputation. We continue to be committed to maintaining independent editorial decision-making, although we now have implemented additional editorial board membership criteria to prevent membership by individuals who are or have in the past been subject to ethical, legal or disciplinary investigations.

Statement released: 24 February 2016

February 27, 2016 9:17 pm

Smut Clyde said...

The paper subsequently disappeared, but what exactly happened is not clear today as at some point [Theoretical Biology Insights] itself disappeared – although there is an echo of it in the Internet Archive, and a blank Editorial Board page here. Again, since I have been boycotted by Tom Hill I cannot seek clarification from him.

The LA website also has this vestigial Contents page lurking within its entrails in the manner of an appendix:
http://www.la-press.com/journal.php?
pa=about&journal_id=107&description_id=1672
-- although the internal links simply re-direct to a Search page.

Fortunately, a later archived page at the Wayback Machine (the Nov.30 2009 capture) does retain the papers themselves, including Persinger's legendary contribution to knowledge:
http://web.archive.org/web/20091130094246/http://www.la-press.com/theoretical-biology-insights-journal-j107

The next captured version was in 2010, by which date the journal had been unpublished, and we read a message that "This journal is archived and is no longer published by Libertas Academica. All articles published in the journal will remain freely available."

As you noted, this promise was flatly untrue -- the publishers made no attempt to archive the articles or to ensure their future availability. So I am wondering about the status of the other, non-Persinger paper to be published through that outlet ("From Molecules to Organisms: Towards Multiscale Integrated Models of Biological Systems"). The authors have

provided access to their own saved copy, through ResearchGate and elsewhere. But does it have any official recognition? Can Lavelle et al. cite it within their CVs?

Naturally I am disappointed when a publisher charges a publication fee and then reneges on the deal. It is a pity that no-one there will reply to your e-mails to defend themselves against the hostile accusations that this kind of behaviour invites.

February 27, 2016 11:00 pm

Richard Poynder said...

Thanks for commenting Smut Clyde. You inspired me to take another look in the Wayback Machine.

There I note that the EiC of *Autism Insights* was Anthony J. Russo. I also note that Russo has co-authored papers with Andrew Wakefield, Arthur Krigsman and Bryan Jepson. The latter two (with Wakefield) were listed as staff members of the Thoughtful House Center for Children in 2009.

These four have co-authored papers both with Dove Press and elsewhere with Libertas Academica. See also here, here, and here.

I also found a list of the editorial board for *Autism Insights* as it was in 2014.

March 01, 2016 5:55 am

Richard Poynder said...

By way of an update, Libertas Academica was acquired by Sage Publishing in September 2016. Details here.

April 05, 2017 12:27 pm

Post a Comment

Newer Post Home Older Post

Subscribe to: Post Comments (Atom)

Website maintained by NARKAN. Powered by Blogger.